



News From

Maggie Brooks

Monroe County Executive

For Immediate Release
Wednesday, December 7, 2005

BROOKS URGES CAUTION ON LOCAL ROADWAYS DURING WINTER SEASON

Monroe County Executive **Maggie Brooks**, along with State, County, and local municipal highway authorities, today urged local motorists to use caution while driving during the winter season. This safety message was delivered as part of a news conference launching Winter Weather Awareness Week, a County-wide initiative to educate the community about important winter weather issues.

*"Using good judgment on the road, especially during the winter, affects the safety of the entire community," said **Brooks**. "While many of us have experience in driving under snowy and icy conditions, it is important that we all remain alert and cautious."*

*"Plowing and salting of roads and highways is the basic course of action all highway departments use to keep driving conditions passable in winter weather," said **Charles E. Moynihan**, regional director of the New York State Department of Transportation. "Unfortunately, the effectiveness of salt is greatly reduced once temperatures dip below 20 degrees. When temperatures go below that level, motorists need to know that roads may be slick and that driving habits must be adjusted accordingly."*

*"With snowstorms and cold weather already upon us, it is extremely important that our community adapts to driving in more difficult conditions," said **Terrence Rice**, Director of the Monroe County Department of Transportation. "There are many steps motorists can take to drive more cautiously in winter weather, including things as simple as clearing your car of ice and snow before driving, allowing longer brake distances, and accelerating more slowly. By following guidelines like these, our community will be able to enjoy a safe winter season."*

*"Now that winter is here, all of the municipal highway employees are busy cleaning the roads for your safe travel," said **David Widger**, Ogden Superintendent of Highways and President of the Monroe County Highway Superintendents Association. "This doesn't mean that all of the roads will be*

--more--

Brooks Urges Caution on Local Roadways – Page 2

clean all the time. Each driver should adjust his or her speeds for the current conditions. Giving yourself additional travel time will also help you have a safe trip each time you are on the roadways. Driving too fast for road and weather conditions is usually the cause of winter accidents.”

Appropriate action in frigid weather includes: reducing speed appropriately for road conditions, leaving more stopping distance between other vehicles, keeping vehicles free of snow accumulation to enhance visibility (including headlamps and taillights) and more regular monitoring of road conditions.

Motorists are also reminded to keep a warm blanket, water, and other appropriate supplies in their vehicle in case they are stuck or stranded during cold weather conditions.

For more helpful driving tips, see the attached Winter Driving Guide.

###

*Media Inquiries, contact:
Department of Communications at 753-1080*

Winter Driving Tips

Pick the right tires. If you need to drive a lot in slippery conditions, it's a good idea to replace summer or all-season tires with a set of dedicated winter tires. These have tread patterns and rubber compounds specially designed to grip snow and ice, for optimum traction on slick roads. Winter tires typically have shorter tread life and generate more road noise than the all-season tires that your vehicle came with. But the extra safety they provide is generally worth the compromise.

For extreme conditions, studded snow tires or even tire chains may be warranted. Because they can be tough on road surfaces, check if they are legal in your area before making the investment. In addition, it's always important to monitor tire pressure, as incorrect inflation can compromise a vehicle's handling and road-holding ability.

Clear off the snow and ice before driving. If snow has fallen since your car was parked, take the time to thoroughly brush it off the vehicle and scrape any ice from the windows. This will ensure that you have optimum visibility and that no large clumps of snow fall off of the vehicle once you begin driving, which can be a hazard for other motorists. In addition, headlamps and taillights may need to be wiped clean from road salt and grunge. When entering the vehicle, kick as much snow off of your feet as possible. Snow tracked inside the vehicle can contribute to window fogging.

Accelerate slowly to reduce wheel spin. If starting from a standstill on slick snow or ice, start in second gear so the vehicle is less likely to spin the tires. The automatic transmissions on some vehicles have a winter mode that automatically starts in a higher gear.

Reduce your speed and drive smoothly. In slippery conditions, tires lose their grip more easily, affecting all aspects of your driving: braking, turning, and accelerating. The key is to drive as smoothly as possible, avoiding sudden actions or rapid movements of any kind. Drive as if you have a bowl of water in your lap and don't want to spill any of it.

Allow longer braking distances. Plan on starting your braking sooner than you normally would in dry conditions to give yourself extra room, and use more gentle pressure on the brake pedal.

Don't lock your wheels when braking. Locked wheels can make the vehicle

slide or skid. If you have a vehicle without an antilock braking system (ABS),

-Page 1 of 2-

you may need to gently apply the brakes repeatedly to avoid having them lock up the wheels. If your vehicle has ABS, simply depress the brake pedal firmly and hold it down. ABS typically sends a vibration or pulsing sensation through the brake pedal. If you feel this, don't let up; it's normal.

Perform one action at a time when accelerating, braking, and turning.

Asking a vehicle to do two things at once such as braking and turning, or accelerating and turning-can reduce your control. When taking a turn, for instance, slowly apply the brakes while the vehicle is going straight. When it's at the right speed to take the turn, let up on the brakes and smoothly turn the steering wheel. After you're through the turn, slowly depress the accelerator to regain your speed.

Avoid sudden actions when cornering. A sudden maneuver -- such as hard braking, a quick turn of the steering wheel, sudden acceleration, or shifting a manual transmission -- can upset a vehicle's dynamics when it's taking a turn. In slick conditions, this can cause it to more easily go out of control.

Be ready to correct for a slide. Should the rear end of the vehicle begin to slide during a turn, gently let off on the accelerator and turn the steering wheel in the direction of the slide. This will help straighten it out. If the front end begins to plow off course, again let up on the accelerator and hold the steering wheel in the direction you want to go. Once the car slows enough to regain traction, it should begin turning again.

Don't let four- or all-wheel drive give you a false sense of security. 4WD and AWD systems only provide extra traction when accelerating. They provide no advantage when braking or cornering. So use the above tips no matter what type of vehicle you're driving.

Be extra wary of other motorists. They may not be driving as cautiously as you.

